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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 6736th meeting of the Security Council, held on 21 March 2012, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East", the President of the Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls its Presidential Statement of 3 August 2011 and its Press Statement of 1 March 2012.

"The Security Council expresses its gravest concern at the deteriorating situation in Syria which has resulted in a serious human rights crisis and a deplorable humanitarian situation. The Security Council expresses its profound regret at the death of many thousands of people in Syria.

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, and to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

"The Security Council welcomes the appointment of Joint Special Envoy for the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan, following the General Assembly resolution A/RES/66/253 of 16 February 2012 and relevant resolutions of the League of Arab States.

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the efforts of the Envoy to bring an immediate end to all violence and human rights violations, secure humanitarian access, and facilitate a Syrian-led political transition to a democratic, plural political system, in which citizens are equal regardless of their affiliations or ethnicities or beliefs, including through commencing a comprehensive political dialogue between the Syrian government and the whole spectrum of the Syrian opposition.

"To this aim, the Security Council fully supports the initial six-point proposal submitted to the Syrian authorities, as outlined by the Envoy to the Security Council on 16 March 2012, to:

(1) commit to work with the Envoy in an inclusive Syrian-led political process to address the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people, and, to this end, commit to appoint an empowered interlocutor when invited to do so by the Envoy;

(2) commit to stop the fighting and achieve urgently an effective United Nations supervised cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all

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parties to protect civilians and stabilize the country. To this end, the Syrian government should immediately cease troop movements towards, and end the use of heavy weapons in, population centres, and begin pullback of military concentrations in and around population centres. As these actions are being taken on the ground, the Syrian government should work with the Envoy to bring about a sustained cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties with an effective United Nations supervision mechanism. Similar commitments would be sought by the Envoy from the opposition and all relevant elements to stop the fighting and work with him to bring about a sustained cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties with an effective United Nations supervision mechanism;

(3) ensure timely provision of humanitarian assistance to all areas affected by the fighting, and to this end, as immediate steps, to accept and implement a daily two hour humanitarian pause and to coordinate exact time and modalities of the daily pause through an efficient mechanism, including at local level;

(4) intensify the pace and scale of release of arbitrarily detained persons, including especially vulnerable categories of persons, and persons involved in peaceful political activities, provide without delay through appropriate channels a list of all places in which such persons are being detained, immediately begin organizing access to such locations and through appropriate channels respond promptly to all written requests for information, access or release regarding such persons;

(5) ensure freedom of movement throughout the country for journalists and a non-discriminatory visa policy for them;

(6) respect freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully as legally guaranteed.

"The Security Council calls upon the Syrian government and opposition to work in good faith with the Envoy towards a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis and to implement fully and immediately his initial six-point proposal.

"The Security Council requests the Envoy to update the Council regularly and in a timely manner on the progress of his mission. In the light of these reports, the Security Council will consider further steps as appropriate."